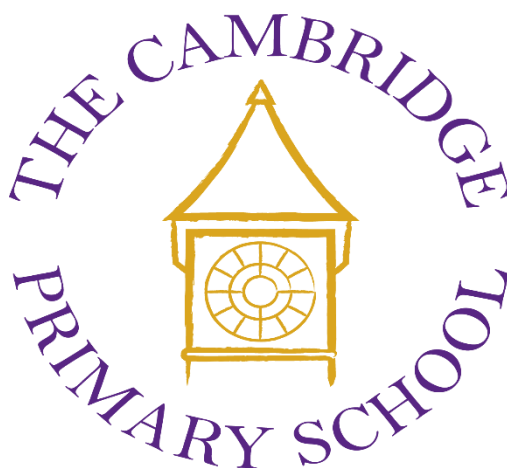


**THE CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

***'Inspiring Minds Together'***

**MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST OTHER PUPILS POLICY**

**2025**



|                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Date of Approval:</b>    | Nov 2025 |
| <b>Date of Next Review:</b> | Nov 2026 |

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## **Managing Allegations Against other Pupils Policy**

The 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025', states that governing bodies should ensure policies state 'how allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with'. This policy has been written in line with Hampshire County Council's Model Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and forms an integral part of our overall Child Protection and Safeguarding framework.

### **INTENT**

At The Cambridge Primary School, we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. We recognise that some pupils will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their conduct will be dealt with under The Cambridge Primary School's Behaviour and Relationships policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding policy in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025). The Managing Allegations Against other Pupils Policy is firmly established and understood by the whole school community. The ethos of the school as reflected in our Vision Statement and our Behaviour and Relationships policy incorporates measures that we hope will prevent child-on child abuse and subsequently, pupils making allegations against other pupils.

At the Cambridge Primary School, we intend:

- To minimise the risk of allegations against other pupils
- To clarify the allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues
- To explain the safeguarding implications of sexual activity between young people
- To provide a clear procedure to follow if an allegation against a pupil is made
- To create a culture where pupils feel confident to report concerns, knowing they will be listened to, supported, believed and valued
- To support both victims and those who have caused harm in a proportionate and considered way

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Minimising the risk of allegations against other pupils**

At the Cambridge Primary School, we will implement:

- A developmentally appropriate PSHE curriculum which develops students understanding of acceptable behaviours, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe.
- Modelling of appropriate social interactions.
- Effective systems for children to be able to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, supported, believed and valued, and that the issues raised will be looked into and addressed.
- Targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those pupils identified as being at risk.
- Robust risk assessments and targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils.

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- Engagement with specialist support and interventions.
- A whole-school approach that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment.
- Teaching through our RSHE curriculum about healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries, consent, body confidence, recognising abusive behaviour, and how to access support.

### **Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues**

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. In these circumstances, it is important that the SEND policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection policy should be considered in conjunction with this.

Some of the Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that, to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

If the allegation:-

- Is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- Raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

- Physical Abuse:
  - Violence, particularly pre-planned
  - Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse:

- Blackmail or extortion
- Threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse:

- Indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sharing non-consensual nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting and youth produced sexual imagery).

Sexual Exploitation:

- Encouraging other children to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour (For example - having an older boyfriend/girlfriend, associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children, staying out overnight)

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- Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

Abuse in Intimate Personal Relationships:

- Also known as teenage relationship abuse
- Controlling or coercive behaviour within peer relationships

Causing Someone to Engage in Sexual Activity Without Consent:

- Forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party

Initiation/Hazing Type Violence and Rituals:

- Activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group

Online Child-on-Child Abuse:

- Sexual harassment online, including:
  - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos
  - Sharing of unwanted explicit content
  - Sexualised online bullying
  - Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media
  - Sexual exploitation, coercion and threats
  - Coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online

### **The safeguarding implications of sexual activity between young people<sup>1</sup>**

The intervention of child protection agencies in situations involving sexual activity between children can require difficult professional judgments. Some situations are statutorily clear – for example, a child under the age of 13 cannot consent to sexual activity. But it will not necessarily be appropriate to initiate safeguarding procedures where sexual activity involving children and young people below the age of legal consent (16 years) comes to notice. In our society generally the age at which children become sexually active has steadily dropped. It is important to distinguish between consensual sexual activity between children of a similar age (where at least one is below the age of consent), and sexual activity involving a power imbalance, or some form of coercion or exploitation. It may also be difficult to be sure that what has or has been alleged to have taken place definitely does have a sexual component.

As usual, important decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, on the basis of an assessment of the children's best interests. Referral under safeguarding arrangements may be necessary, guided by an assessment of the extent to which a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Key specific considerations will include:

- The age, maturity and understanding of the children;
- Any disability or special needs of the children;
- Their social and family circumstance;

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- Any evidence in the behaviour or presentation of the children that might suggest they have been harmed;
- Any evidence of pressure to engage in sexual activity;
- Any indication of sexual exploitation.

There are also contextual factors. Gender, sexuality, race and levels of sexual knowledge can all be used to exert power. A sexual predator may sometimes be a woman or girl and the victim a boy.

#### Our Zero-Tolerance Approach

At The Cambridge Primary School, we have a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. This means:

- We will not tolerate, dismiss or normalise any form of child-on-child abuse
- Abuse will never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys"
- However, we will not demonise pupils – we will support and listen to all pupils involved
- Our response will be proportionate, considered, supportive and decided on a case-by-case basis
- We will balance appropriate consequences with education and safeguarding support
- We recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported

#### Procedure to follow if an allegation against a pupil is made

- When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern (see above), the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed and procedure followed for recording the disclosure.
- When the allegation has not been made by the victim directly, (for example, by a friend or in an overheard conversation), staff should not assume that someone else is responding to the incident or concern and should speak to the DSL whilst bearing in mind why the victim has chosen not to make a report themselves.
- When an allegation is stated to have taken place away from the school premises, online, and/or when there are children from different schools involved, the safeguarding principles remain the same. In such circumstances, appropriate information sharing will be especially important.
- A factual record should be made of the allegation on CPOMs, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- The DSL will consider;
  - The wishes of the victim.
  - The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused.
  - Ages of the children/young people involved.
  - Developmental stages of the children/young people.
  - Any power imbalance between the children/young people.
  - Any previous incidents.
  - On-going risks.

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- Other related issues or wider context.
  - Whether the incident occurred online or offline, or both.
  - Any links to children sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.
- The DSL will manage the report with the following options:
    - Manage internally - where this is considered appropriate and statutory interventions are not required
    - Refer to Early Help - where early help is appropriate and statutory interventions are not required
    - Refer to Children's Social Care- The DSL should contact the children's reception team (CRT) to discuss the case. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a referral where appropriate. If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, CRT will refer the case to the multi-agency agency safeguarding hub where the police will become involved.
  - Parents, of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral.
  - The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both pupils. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, along with the reasons behind them, will be recorded in writing.
  - It may be appropriate to suspend the pupil being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.
  - Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.
  - In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan. The risk assessment will consider: the victim, especially their protection and support; the alleged cause of risk, their support needs and any discipline action; all other children at the school; the victim and the alleged cause of risk, sharing classes and space at school.
  - The risk assessment should be kept under review and the plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.
  - A support plan, focusing on restorative justice and emotional well-being, will be put in place for both the cause of risk, and the victim.

#### Supporting Victims

We will:

- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- Never give victims the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse.
- Never make a victim feel ashamed for making a report
- Take the wishes of the victim into account when deciding on our response
- Keep victims a reasonable distance from the alleged perpetrator(s) on school premises, including during before and after-school activities and a risk assessment put into place to try and limit interactions.

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- Consider the victim's preferences – for example, some victims may prefer the alleged perpetrator stays in their class but not sitting next to them, rather than being removed entirely, especially if they're concerned about how the perpetrator's friends might react
- Provide appropriate support based on the victim's needs, age, developmental stage, and the nature of the allegations

#### Supporting Alleged Perpetrators

We recognise that children who display harmful behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. We will:

- Gently but firmly condemn the behaviour, not the pupil
- Offer alleged perpetrators a safe space to discuss what may have happened to them
- Provide appropriate support, which may involve ELSA, counselling or clinical care
- Have a plan in place to help them modify their behaviour
- Balance the need to safeguard the victim and other children with providing the alleged perpetrator with education and safeguarding support
- Consider the age, developmental stage, nature and frequency of allegations, and any unmet needs when deciding on support and sanctions
- Recognise that we can take disciplinary action while other investigations are ongoing, and that support and sanctions can happen at the same time

#### Staff Training and Awareness

All staff will receive training to ensure they:

- Are aware of the possibility of child-on-child abuse both inside and outside school, and online
- Understand that even if there are no reports, it doesn't mean abuse isn't happening
- Know how to identify child-on-child abuse early to prevent it from escalating
- Understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours and not downplaying them
- Know what to do if they have a concern about a child
- Understand how to offer support to victims and alleged perpetrators
- Recognise that children can abuse other children and that online abuse can take various forms
- Are aware that girls are more likely to be victims and boys are more likely to be perpetrators, but remain vigilant for all forms of abuse

#### Recording and Review

We will:

- Record all concerns, discussions and decisions made, along with the reasons behind them, in writing
- Regularly review our responses to identify potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour

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- Reflect on decisions and actions taken and update relevant policies with lessons learnt
- Consider whether there are wider issues relating to our school culture that need to be addressed

### **IMPACT**

At the Cambridge Primary School, we monitor the impact of this policy through:

- Weekly Safeguarding Meetings, reviewing record keeping, procedures and incidents
- Pupil conferencing and surveys, ensuring pupils feel comfortable and confident to name and talk to a trusted adult in the school and knowing what constitutes respectful friendships
- Quality Assurance of the planning, teaching and learning of RSE and PSHE
- Parent surveys, ensuring parents feel confident that allegations, concerns and incidents are handled appropriately creating a safe environment and community
- Analysis of behaviour and safeguarding data to identify patterns or trends
- Staff training evaluations to ensure understanding and confidence in applying this policy
- Review of our RSHE curriculum to ensure it effectively addresses healthy relationships, consent, body confidence, and recognising abusive behaviour
- Monitoring the culture of our school to ensure pupils feel confident to report concerns

The outcome of this monitoring is presented to the Local Advisory Committee through the safeguarding update at half-termly meetings. It is also reflected in our annual safeguarding audit (Hampshire County Council template).

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to relevant legislation or guidance.

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<sup>i</sup> Taken from The safeguarding implications of events leading to the closure of Stanbridge Earls School – A Serious Case Review (2015)